
SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY TO COORDINATE WITH THE
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, CORPORATION FOR TRAVEL PROMOTION, AND
HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO AMEND THE H-1B VISA
LAW TO ALLOW FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH CULTURAL AND
LANGUAGE SKILLS THAT WILL HELP CREATE A MORE WELCOMING
ENVIRONMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS.

1 WHEREAS, the tourism industry constitutes the largest
2 single contributor to the State's gross domestic product,
3 representing approximately twenty-one percent of its economy;
4 and
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6 WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed the Travel
7 Promotion Act of 2009 that established the Corporation for
8 Travel Promotion with the power, among other duties, to:

9 (1) Provide useful information to foreign tourists
10 interested in traveling to the United States;

11 (2) Maximize the economic and diplomatic benefits of
12 travel to the United States by promoting the United
13 States to world travelers; and

14 (3) Ensure that international travel benefits all states
15 and identify opportunities and strategies to promote
16 tourism to international travelers; and
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18 WHEREAS, Hawaii's top four visitor markets, which have
19 traditionally been the western United States, eastern United
20 States, Japan, and Canada, now include the emerging Other Asia
21 tourism markets of China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and
22 Singapore, which has increased by 16.5 percent; and
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24 WHEREAS, it is important for the State to diversify its
25 visitor markets so that weakness in a particular market at any
26 given time can be offset by strength in another; and
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1 WHEREAS, nonstop air service to Hawaii has grown
2 significantly from Asia recently, including re-established
3 service from Taipei, new service from Beijing, and expanded
4 service from Shanghai; and
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6 WHEREAS, while the hospitality industry in Hawaii has
7 gained valuable insights and experience regarding the
8 preferences and expectations of Japanese travelers and has
9 worked diligently to create a welcoming environment for them, an
10 important factor in the evolution of the Hawaii visitor industry
11 in creating a more welcoming environment for international
12 visitors, including visitors from the Other Asia tourism market,
13 is the availability of people who understand the culture and
14 mores of the foreign visitor and have the skills to read, write,
15 and speak with foreign visitors at an honorific level; and
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17 WHEREAS, the H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows
18 a United States company to employ a foreign individual who has a
19 high degree of specialized knowledge in a "specialty occupation"
20 for up to six years; and
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22 WHEREAS, the description of "specialized occupation" under
23 the H-1B visa does not include employees with cultural
24 qualifications and skills in reading, writing, and speaking in
25 the language of international visitors; and
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27 WHEREAS, the H-1B visa law requires amendments before the
28 hospitality industry may hire more employees who are fluent in
29 the languages of international visitors, with the cultural,
30 reading, and writing skills to communicate with international
31 visitors; now, therefore,
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33 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
34 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2015,
35 that the Hawaii Tourism Authority is urged to coordinate with
36 the hospitality industry, Corporation for Travel Promotion, and
37 Hawaii's congressional delegation to seek amendments to the H-1B
38 visa law to amend the definition of "specialized occupation" to
39 include employees who are fluent in the languages of
40 international visitors, with the cultural, reading, and writing
41 skills necessary to communicate with international visitors; and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Interim President and
3 Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Chief
4 Executive Officer of the Corporation for Travel Promotion, and
5 Hawaii's congressional delegation.

